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ABSTRACT

Pennsylvania's Student Advisory Board (SAB) was created by the state Department of Education to represent high school students at the state level. This SAB annual report begins with excerpts from the Student Awareness Day program, including Governor Dick Thornburgh's remarks and proclamation and brief statements by state and SAB officials. The bulk of the document consists of SAB committees' reports on their activities and publications. Included are summaries and materials from the Communications Committee, which is responsible for SAB publicity; the Legislative Committee, charged with getting a state law passed mandating the SAB; the Individual Needs Committee, whose goal is to make the educational system more responsive to handicapped and gifted students' needs; and the Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques Committee, charged with promoting teachers' voluntary use of a form on which students rate their teachers. (RW)

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REPORT

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

1980-81

EA 014 299

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Dick Thornburgh, Governor

Department of Education
Robert G. Scanlon, Secretary

Office of Basic Education
Ronald H. Lewis, Commissioner
Francis J. Moran, Deputy Commissioner

Office of Field Liaison and Personnel Administration
Carolyn C. Brown, Executive Director

Department Liaison to the Student Advisory Board
Roberta Waldman, Special Assistant, Field Liaison
Biagio Musto, Division of Pupil Personnel Services

Note: The Student Advisory Board Report has been written by the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board Committees.

Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
P.O. Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 17108

EA 014 538

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Ginny Thornburgh

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Secretary of Education

The Honorable William Davis
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The 1980-81 Student Advisory Board would like to extend its deepest thanks to two individuals who were essential to our efforts, Roberta Waldman and Biagio Musto. Their advice, understanding and patience were irreplaceable.

FOREWORD

In addition to committee reports, the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board Report includes excerpts from the Student Awareness Day program held in Harrisburg May 6, 1981. That program marked the occasion of Governor Dick Thornburgh's signing of a proclamation honoring students in the schools of the Commonwealth. The full text of the proclamation, the Governor's remarks, and a note of appreciation to teachers follow.

Student Awareness Day
Wednesday, May 6, 1981

Program

Introduction--Mike Maloney

Welcome--Dr. Ronald Lewis

Introduction of Governor Thornburgh--Dave Katis

Governor Dick Thornburgh

Presentation of Award to Governor Thornburgh--Denise Kennedy

Introduction of the Harrisburg High School Chorus--Theresa Robinson

Presentation of Other Various Awards--Edda Cantler

Introduction of Student Advisory Board Committees--Donna Zotter

- Ron DeiCas--StOTT Committee
- Shelleylynn Turner--Special Needs Committee
- Meghan Duffy--Lobbying Committee
- John Bradley--Communications Committee

Student Advisory Board Challenge--Ron Tenpas

Governor Dick Thornburgh*

"Good morning. Members of the Pennsylvania Student Advisory Board and friends of education in Pennsylvania, it's a great pleasure for me to visit with you at the beginning of a busy day, and designate officially May 6, 1981, as Student Awareness Day.

I think you ought to know that this very official looking proclamation which I am about to read and sign had its genesis at a meeting held with the Student Advisory Board at the Governor's Home earlier this year, where we had a chance to meet with the leaders of the student community from across the Commonwealth and discuss, informally, some of their concerns about the state's role in providing for a maximum amount of input into the decision-making process.

One of the things that we discussed at that time was, in fact, that there was no specific recognition given to the Student Advisory Board and to students in general across the Commonwealth. I am pleased to be able to say that we've accomplished one of those goals that were discussed earlier this year.

Now, to make it really official, I will read this proclamation and sign and deliver it to the board so that it can become a permanent momento of the recognition that it so justly deserves by these student leaders."

---

*Excerpts from Governor Dick Thornburgh's remarks at the Student Awareness Day Program.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
HARRISBURG

PROCLAMATION

STUDENT AWARENESS DAY
MAY 6, 1981

As the leaders of tomorrow, Pennsylvania students play a critical role in the future of our Commonwealth and nation. Too often we forget the important part that young people can play in helping to set priorities, particularly in the area of education.

Students can provide fresh and innovative ideas to aid us in understanding the concerns of young people across the state, and can offer approaches that might not otherwise be considered. Probably the greatest ability of our high school students is to be able to look at a problem optimistically and idealistically while bringing the energy and vibrancy of their youth to bear on new challenges.

The Pennsylvania Student Advisory Board was established in 1972 to ensure that the viewpoints of high school students throughout the state were given appropriate consideration. Since that time, this enthusiastic group of high school juniors and seniors has met regularly to draft and present reports outlining the concerns of students to the State Board of Education, the Secretary of Education, the Governor and the General Assembly. While this structure provides a means to maintain contact with students, it is important that all Pennsylvanians become aware of the contributions that young people make to their communities.

Therefore, I, Dick Thornburgh, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania do hereby declare May 6, 1981 as STUDENT AWARENESS DAY. I urge all citizens of the Keystone State to support the endeavors of high school students to become active contributors to the Commonwealth.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, this sixth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty-one, and of the Commonwealth the two hundred and fifth.

Dick Thornburgh
Governor

WELCOME*

Ronald Lewis, Commissioner of Basic Education

My primary purpose this morning is to give you some sense of the commitment that we have at the Department of Education toward the student process in general and particularly toward the Student Advisory Board. This is very easy for many of us because we came to the Department with that kind of commitment and embodying that particular philosophy. It's been very easy to see that commitment carried forth by the kind of students that we've been privileged to work with at the state level. I'd like to say that the highlight of my career is oft times my opportunity to interact with students in general across the Commonwealth, especially with those students who come to Harrisburg.

I think that what has to happen with our students when we talk about their participation in the decision-making process is that some basic decisions have yet to be made about that process. I think, in all fairness, students are going to have to be informed by school staffs just which decisions are theirs, which decisions are to be made by school staffs and school administrators and which decisions can be shared. Knowing who is making which decision is one way to keep us out of decision-making traumas in schools.

We had an interesting conversation yesterday about student apathy, and I would like to pass on what one student said to me: "Students are not apathetic. They want to participate. They are dying to participate. The problem is that they are unaccustomed to participation because they feel that perhaps participation is not encouraged enough in a substantive and meaningful manner by more adults." That is very important for us to remember, because participation in decision-making often can begin in the home. Participation in decision making can be part of what happens in YMCAs, in Scouts, in clubs and in agencies. I believe that perhaps society at large ought to embrace the concept of encouraging the ideas and philosophies of its young. Perhaps in that way we can all grow and we can all lead a much much more meaningful life.

Welcome to Harrisburg and have an excellent, excellent day."

---

*Student Awareness Day Ceremony, May 6, 1981

Special Note to Teachers

Award to Teachers*
Edda Jane Cantler

There is no way to award teachers for the time, dedication, and commitment they give to students. The next award is a gesture of gratitude and love. As a symbol of our appreciation to all teachers in the Commonwealth, we would like to present this award to Louis DeVicaris, Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year 1980-81.

Acceptance
Louis DeVicaris
Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year

Thank you very much. I really can't express the feelings that I have today to see the future of America working. You are my life blood. You make me what I am. Without you people I wouldn't be here. You give me the chances and the challenges to try to meet your needs and the needs of the future. It's a real honor for me to be part of this great educational system to see the involvement here. Thank you very much.

---

*Student Awareness Day Activities

Introduction*

Good morning, my name is Mike Maloney. I am from North Catnolic High School in Intermediate Unit #2 and I represent the Pittsburgh Catholic Schools. I am a member of the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board. Welcome to these Student Awareness Day proceedings and, on behalf of the Student Advisory Board, thank you for attending.

The Student Advisory Board, made up of representatives from each Intermediate Unit of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was created in the summer of 1972 by Secretary of Education John C. Pittenger, who believed that high school students should be given a voice in making state-level educational decisions. The board's major function was to review major educational issues and recommend to the Secretary ways to deal with them. In addition, Secretary Pittenger urged each Intermediate Unit to create a student forum, made up of a representative from each school district, who would meet regularly to discuss local educational concerns and to bring major issues to the attention of the Student Advisory Board. During his tenure, Secretary Pittenger worked very closely with the board. In 1977, Caryl Kline became Secretary of Education and maintained the support for the board as well as showed great interest in its work. In 1978, Robert Scanlon, as Secretary of Education, pledged to continue to support the board and its activities. He participated in several of the Student Advisory Board meetings.

We, the present members of the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board, believe that students, as the consumers of education, should have an effective vehicle for presenting their concerns and for influencing educational policies and practices in Pennsylvania. Throughout its eight-year existence, the Student Advisory Board has been that vehicle. As it is presently organized, however, the board serves at the pleasure of the Secretary of Education and has no legal basis for existing. It can be abolished at any time. Over the past years, various efforts have been made to change this situation by having the board recognized by an act of the legislature. This year's Student Advisory Board has continued this effort by establishing a Legislative Committee. The three other committees of the Student Advisory Board are the StOTT Committee, the Individual Needs Committee, and the Communications Committee. The reports from these committees follow.

We, the members of SAB, are promoting this day to make people realize that there are many outstanding students in Pennsylvania. Too much is said about the negative aspects of education. We would like to show that students do care about their education and their society and are willing to work to improve them."

---

*Opening address given by Michael Maloney, "Student Awareness Day Program," Forum Building, May 6, 1981, Harrisburg, PA

Communications Committee

Since its inception in 1972, the Student Advisory Board has been a somewhat unknown entity in the realm of education throughout Pennsylvania. The 1980-81 Student Advisory Board has explored ways to overcome this obscurity and, with this in mind, the Communications Committee resolved to make the Student Advisory Board a well-known educational resource throughout the Commonwealth so as to give all high school students an understanding that they do have a voice in Harrisburg which will knowingly and willingly expresses their opinions and concerns.

The obscurity of the Student Advisory Board reflects a problem confronting many Pennsylvania students today. There is a lack of recognition and appreciation of students. Too much is said about the negative aspects of education. Our goal is to show that students do care about their education and their society and are willing to work to improve them. To combat the problems of the Student Advisory Board's obscurity and the general lack of recognition accorded to worthy students, the Communications Committee decided to promote Student Awareness Day.

The Student Awareness Day program consisted of an hour of activities attended by state legislators, educators, intermediate unit officials and, most importantly, students. During the proceedings Governor Dick Thornburgh signed a proclamation officially declaring May 6 as Student Awareness Day; certificates were presented from the Student Advisory Board to various individuals and professional groups; committee reports were given by the Student Advisory Board; and a performance was given by the Harrisburg High School Chorus. In addition to these activities, high schools participated in Student Awareness Day on the local level by sponsoring student government elections, recognition ceremonies for outstanding students and local media coverage. In addition to Student Awareness Day, the committee developed a Student Advisory Board letterhead (which appears on the front cover of this report) and founded a Student Advisory Board newsletter.

Recommendations

The Communications Committee's recommendations focus on two problem areas, the first area being how to increase the effectiveness of the Student Advisory Board. In the future, we feel, the board should be responsible for the writing and dissemination of a newsletter distributed to intermediate units, student forums, state legislators, the Governor's Office and local district superintendents and school boards.

The newsletter will provide two major benefits:

1. Individuals highly involved with education will be regularly informed of what students consider issues and concerns.

2. It will encourage contributions from those not directly involved with the Student Advisory Board.

The second problem area deals with student recognition and, coupled with this recognition, participation. There are many students who are quite capable of contributing positively to society in general and to the educational process specifically. It is foolish to waste this resource, and we, therefore, have several recommendations that deal with methods to increase student participation:

1. Establish student advisory committees in school districts. These committees should make non-binding recommendations on curriculum development, disciplinary policy and activities planning.

2. Encourage students to attend school board meetings and examine the possibility of having student representation on school boards.

3. Emphasize and reward the positive contributions that students make, not just the negative.

Conclusion:

The Communications Committee feels that Student Awareness Day was successful in bringing to people's attention the need to acknowledge the student viewpoint and to examine their concerns. The Student Advisory Board can only point out the need to recognize and to listen to students. We have now pointed out this need, but it will be up to educators and the educational system to respond to it. We hope that educators will continue to work closely with the Student Advisory Board as one means of providing a voice for students. The committee would like to extend its deepest appreciation to Linda Walter from the Division of School Communications of the Department of Education for her time and patience in assisting our committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Communications Committee
1980-81 SAB

Ron Tenpas
Mike Maloney
John C. Bradley
David Katis
Denise Kennedy
Theresa Robinson

Legislative Committee

Continuing in the tradition of the previous Student Advisory Boards, the 1980-81 board intensified its campaign to become a permanent part of Pennsylvania's educational system. Focusing on the 1981 House Bill #286, which would mandate the Student Advisory Board, the Legislative Committee began to rally support by dealing with the state legislators directly. To achieve this link, the Student Advisory Board began writing letters and making personal visits to state legislators. In addition, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit 23 generated a survey of students concerning the Student Advisory Board. The results, which showed a definite interest and enthusiasm among students about their education, will be presented later in this report.

It is the committee's feeling that the Student Advisory Board is vital to today's education. Not only does it provide students a voice in their education, it also gives the board members an opportunity to experience leadership and responsibility . The committee feels that these benefits far outweigh any others, positive or negative, for by allowing students to participate, it completes the circle of equal representation that is so vital to any government.

The ultimate goal of the 1980-81 Legislative Committee was to see the passage of House Bill #286. At present, House Bill #286 awaits approval of the House.

Resources

The Legislative Committee drew upon the experience of the Lobbying Committee of the preceding year (1979-80) as a major resource. Tom Hudlow, a member of last year's committee, returned for his second year and was particularly helpful in transmitting the lessons that he learned about lobbying during his first year.

The major findings gleaned from Tom and from other resource people include the following:

-The importance of senatorial and legislative visits.
-The benefit of letters from Student Forum members and student bodies at large to senators and legislators.
-The Student Forums beginning grass-root campaigns.
-The help of local newspapers to gain popular support.

The above points will be discussed in greater detail later in the report.

Fact Sheet

To prepare for lobbying efforts we the Committee reviewed all basic facts about the Student Advisory Board. In doing so, we drew up a list of questions and then carefully answered them:

Question 1: What is the Student Advisory Board?

The Student Advisory Board is a representative organization comprised of students who are elected from their respective intermediate unit student forums.

Question 2: How is the Student Advisory Board funded and what is the present budget?

The Student Advisory Board presently (July 1980 - July 1981) receives $15,000 on federal funds.

Question 3: What is the purpose of the Student Advisory Board?

The purpose of the Student Advisory Board is to represent the 2.5 million students of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to make those students aware of their opportunity to express their views about education in Pennsylvania. Since teachers are represented by the Pennsylvania State Educators Association (PSEA) and the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers (PFT); school boards are represented by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA); parents are represented by the Parent Teachers Association (PTA); school administrators by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA); Pennsylvania Association of Elementary School Principals (PAESP); and Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals (PASSP); students, as the largest consumers of education, must also be represented. The Student Advisory Board (SAB) effectively serves students.

Question 4: What are the accomplishments of the Student Advisory Board?

The accomplishments of the Student Advisory Board are many. However, we feel the following are most noteworthy:

The Student Advisory Board has

1. Effectively represented students' views.
2. Provided the foundations for a Student Advisory Board newsletter allowing students across the Commonwealth the opportunity to communicate.
3. Developed the Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques instrument.
4. Created the Bill of Students' Rights and Responsibilities.
5. Had a proclamation signed by Governor Dick Thornburgh declaring May 6, 1981, Student Awareness Day.

Question 5: Why is it necessary to enact Student Advisory Board legislation?

As it is now organized, the Student Advisory Board meets purely at the discretion of the Secretary of Education and has no legal basis for existence. It can be terminated at any time. We the members of the Student Advisory Board and the students we represent are working toward gaining the Student Advisory Board permanent status by grounding it in law.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit
Survey

General Information

The basic goal of the Student Advisory Board is to establish and maintain an effective network of communication among the students of Pennsylvania, their student government representatives and their state legislators. To further the participation of the majority of students in individual schools, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit 23 wrote and distributed a survey pertaining to the Student Advisory Board and its purpose and objectives. This preliminary report on the survey was a key factor in informing the average student about the Student Advisory Board. It also provided the Student Advisory Board direct contributions from the students they represent.

Findings of the survey were:

- -The students are concerned about education in Pennsylvania.
- -The students feel they need representation in their state government.
- -The students believe that the Pennsylvania Student Advisory Board may be the most effective means of achieving communication between state government and the students.

The Student Advisory Board acknowledges the efforts of Miss Jean Mohrbacher, Miss Carolyn Cleary and Dr. Donald Wright of Intermediate Unit 23 for their hard work and dedication which led to the success of this survey.

The Legislative Committee gained great insight into the political arena through its lobbying efforts. It is with this insight that the following recommendations have been made for future Student Advisory Board members.

Recommended Lobbying Procedures

1) Let Legislators Know Who You Are: Tell the legislator what district you are from, particularly if you are from his/her district. Legislators respond to their constituents.

2) Know Your Information: Review the important facts about your bill. Stage a mock interview with your legislator.

3) Know Your Legislator: Know who introduced the bill. Know the legislators who favor the bill. Also know the legislators who are against the bill. It is also important to know and understand the political process.

From previous experience, we the Legislative Committee have found the following procedures, listed in the order of effectiveness, to be most helpful.

I. Personal Visits: Whenever lobbying, it is a good idea to follow certain basic rules:

   1. Meet in a small group or singularly with the legislator.

   2. Try to relate to the legislator in a favorable way through good manners and proper attire.

II. Letters: Writing letters is a particularly effective way to reach your legislator, especially a grass-roots, forum-based, letter-writing campaign. Personal letters are most effective, followed by form letters and petitions.

III. Local Press Releases: Writing local newspaper articles in support of your position can help to gain local support for your bill.

We, the Legislative Committee, hope that the above suggestions will help your lobbying efforts. Furthermore, we strongly suggest, and sincerely hope, that if the current House and Senate bills are not passed, the Student Advisory Board of 1981-82 will vigorously pursue the enactment of such bills.

Donna Zotter
Tom Hudlow
Justin Smith
John Gain
Meghan Duffy
Kathy Klinger
Becky Yuran
Leslie Donath
Clifton Kjelgaard

Conclusion

The Lobbying Committee at its first meeting drafted a letter stating the reasons why the Student Advisory Board should be mandated. Each member of this committee took this letter back to their student forums, which worked closely with student councils writing letters to their local state representatives. Through this intense campaign, the student forum, student council representatives and other students came to realize the need for the Student Advisory Board.

It was then the job of the Legislative Committee to insure that the legislators also saw this need. To this end, the committee went to Capitol Hill several times to lobby for passage of the legislation. As of this writing, the bills have been brought out of the Education Committee and are now in the committee most crucial to a new Bill, the Appropriations Committee. This was the very place that previous legislation concerning the Student Advisory Board died. This year, however, the Legislation Committee is optimistic about the chances for passage of these bills. Our optimism is primarily due to that in our current lobbying efforts, we have met with much less resistence and were received much better than student lobbyists in years past.

Only through your continued support can this important vehicle between Capitol Hill and high schools survive.

Individual Needs Committee

During the first meeting of the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board, we members of the Individual Needs Committee recognized the need for making the educational system more responsive to the unique needs of the individual students.

We became more aware of the individual needs of the handicapped and gifted students as a result of a presentation by Charles Wall, special education advisor in the Department of Education. He brought to us a realization of the problems individuals face to overcome those barriers of fear and ignorance which handicap us all. He introduced us to the three major problems that special education faces: lack of money, communication, and simple answers. Through his presentation we also learned of the three areas in which a handicapped or gifted child is helped: school districts, intermediate units, and the State Department of Education.

Mr. Wall regarded special education as regular education modified to meet the needs of the exceptional child. There are two varieties of special education: gifted and handicapped.

Through Mr. Wall's presentation, we developed an awareness of an individual child's abilities and disabilities according to his or her grade level. The methods used for such screening are as follows:

a) Screening for speech.
b) Metropolitan Readiness test.
c) Measured achievement is not at the same level as other children of his or her age.
d) Multiple disciplinary team
    1) psychologist
    2) teacher
    3) advisor
    4) counselor
    5) others
e) Development of an Individual Educational Program (IEP).

Another primary source of information was Paulette Dreisbach, staff development specialist, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit. She gave us an excellent overview of how handicapped individuals function in real life and introduced programs designed to help schools meet the needs of exceptional students. Among these are:

1) Films in health classes on handicapped and gifted students.

2) Assemblies with speakers provided by one of the regional resource centers.

3) Simulating handicapping conditions in a workshop.

In addition to these, the committee recommends involving exceptional students in the program or planning of the program. We feel that participation is necessary but should be voluntary. We direct the preceding recommendations to students, faculty and, most important, those responsible for the students' programs, the educational administrators.

Recommendations

The Special Needs Committee began this year concerning itself with the personal needs of students who were mainstreamed into the educational system. Our main goal is making the system more responsive to the unique needs of the individual.

We recommend several programs to help schools respond to this goal, not only meeting the needs of the handicapped students but also the gifted student. We direct the following recommendations to students, faculty and, most important those responsible for the program of the students, the educational administrators. Our recommendations are:

1. Show films in the health classes on handicapped and gifted students.

2. Plan assemblies with speakers and plan workshops that involve student councils and use simulations.

Conclusion

Our aim this year is to familiarize people with the problems in special education. It is our sincere hope that the future Student Advisory Board members will build upon our foundation and recommend new programs to help those who have unique needs in our educational system.

Included in this report is an extensive resource list which schools may refer to in developing these programs.

Regional Resource Centers (RRC)

What Is the Regional Resources Center (RRC)?

The goal of the RRC is to provide materials, training, and information to meet the needs of teachers, administrators, and others involved in educating exceptional children.

What Services Are Available Through the RRC?

- Loan of instructional materials and equipment
- Loan of films and video cassettes
- Information
- Publications
- Workshops
- Consultations

Who Is Eligible for RRC Services?

- Special educators in state approved private and public school programs in 29 intermediate units.
- Regular educators with students mainstreamed as part of their IEPs.

Eastern
RRC
1013 West 9th Avenue
King of Prussia, PA 19406 215-265-7321

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Harris, PA 17161 717-564-1873

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*Thanks to Montgomery County IU for providing us this information.

PRISE*

What Is PRISE?

The Pennsylvania Resources and Information Center for Special Education (PRISE) is a statewide information dissemination program for special education. PRISE provides information of all kinds in response to questions from special educators. For example, a special education teacher may need information on a new instructional technique or an administrator might be planning an entire special education program. PRISE can provide information about curriculum trends, legislation, best practices, experts in the field, or any other areas in special education.

Who Is Eligible for PRISE Services?

Services are available free of charge to teachers, administrators, and other special education personnel throughout Pennsylvania working in approved school programs for exceptional children and youth.

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on

TRAINING REGULAR CLASS STUDENTS ABOUT HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

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*Furnished by PRISE

Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques Committee

When the present Student Advisory Board convened October 23, 1980, the immediate problem was that last year's Student Advisory Board had left a complete Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques (StOTT) instrument which needed to be distributed in an organized fashion. It was also apparent to the newly formed StOTT Committee that the implementation of the StOTT instrument would encounter opposition from some segments of the educational community. In particular, we became aware of an editorial published in the September 22, 1980, issue of PSEA Voice*, which conveyed the negative attitude of PSEA toward the use of the StOTT instrument by Pennsylvania teachers. It was this report that led us to attempt the following activities:

1) Inviting speakers from PSEA to present their views of StOTT, and in turn listening to SAB's viewpoint.

2) Reviewing the positions of education in articles pertaining to StOTT.

What is StOTT?

StOTT, which stands for Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques, is a numerically rated form that teachers can use to obtain student feedback as to the strong and weak points of their professional techniques.

How to use StOTT?

This year's committee is quite aware that StOTT is controversial. The apprehensions of various sectors of the educational community must be respected; therefore, when StOTT is used, special care must be taken not to offend any of these various groups.

The form is to be used on a purely voluntary basis. It is preferred that information pertaining to StOTT be disseminated by students rather than by the administration. One of the major roadblocks to acceptance of the instrument is the fear of an improper use of StOTT by administrators.

Therefore, the most pertinent recommendation that we can provide groups who plan to use StOTT is that the information pertaining to its implementation be as open as possible. No room for suspicion should be left among the teachers, teachers associations, students or administrators.

*Full text of article appears on p. 25 of this Committee's report.

The following is a list of suggestions in the use of the StOTT in the classroom:

1) The StOTT should not be used to evaluate or compare high school teachers. The types of students being taught appear to influence ratings of teachers too greatly for this.

2) The StOTT is a valuable instrument teachers can use in their own classrooms. Teachers who are aware of the types of students they are teaching can take factors such as student attitudes into consideration when interpreting their ratings.

3) When the results of a StOTT administration are interpreted, results both for individual items and for subscales appear valuable.

4) The StOTT can be used to measure changes in student opinions about a teacher's methods during the school year. The pilot study examined the stability of ratings over a month's time, but the mean ratings received by a teacher were so stable that there would seem to be little loss in reliability when changes are measured over a longer period. Of course, a teacher would want to measure opinions when students are experiencing their usual day-to-day routines. For example, ratings given during the last few days of school might be influenced by students' elation that the school year is ending. It would seem better to measure these end-of-the-year feelings in late April or very early May.

5) The study found it was possible for two similar classes to disagree on their ratings of the same teacher. Thus, a teacher who uses the StOTT might want to administer it to more than one class. If low ratings on an item or a subscale are given by two or more classes, this would suggest that the teacher should look much more closely at this area than at an area for which low ratings were received from only one class.

In addition to our careful study of the many available resources pertaining to the StOTT instrument, we devised a method for an organized distribution of this instrument. We composed a letter addressed to teachers and a letter addressed to administrators, asking each teacher and administrator to review the form and to consider using it in the classroom.* We distributed copies of these letters and enclosed copies of the StOTT instrument to the intermediate units in the state. From there, letters and copies of the instrument were to be distributed to each high school teacher and administrator in the school district.

Although the results of this devised method are not immediately evident, we hope that in the future the StOTT instrument will be accepted as a fair means of observing teachers.

*Copies of these letters follow.

Dear Teacher,

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques (StOTT) form as produced by the Student Advisory Board to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This form has been designed to provide a means whereby teachers can gain insight into student views of their teaching techniques.

We ask that you review the form and use it in any manner you feel appropriate or beneficial to your individual needs or circumstances.

We hope this form will provide a constructive basis for improving the quality of education in your classroom.

Good luck.

The StOTT Committee of the
1980-81 Student Advisory Board

Dear Administrator,

The Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques Committee of the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board has sent copies of our student teacher observation form to members of your faculty.

We are asking that they use it on a voluntary basis. We would hope that you would support any teacher who wishes to use this form. We would like to remind you that this form is intended to be a confidential communication between students and teachers; therefore, we ask that you not attempt to obtain the results of this form from any member of your staff.

If for some reason you do not receive copies of this observation, copies can be obtained from the students in your school that attend the student forum meetings of the county.

Thank you for your cooperation.

The StOTT Committee of the
1980-81 Student Advisory Board

"STUDENTS EVALUATE US? NO!"*

It looks like some bureaucrats and state officials, many far removed from the controversies of today's explosive classrooms, are at it again.

This time, despite all evidence that competency testing of teachers is an unfeasable and unworkable concept, the State Board of Education has received a rating "form" from the Student Advisory Board for use by high school students to "observe" teaching methods or techniques of their teachers.

While the use of the form is optional, nonetheless it will be available to teachers so that high school students may use it to observe and evaluate teachers. The program is detailed in PDE's publication, "Improving Instruction Through Student Observation of Teaching Methods."

The concept is absurd and PSEA will have nothing to so with it! Further, we caution teachers to avoid entrapment through the wily words of those who would encourage its use.

Our board of directors has spoken out against the form and will express our opposition "in detail" to Secretary of Education Scanlon and the state board.

PSEA beat down a similar proposal four years ago. Now, the Student Advisory Board is trying to get it approved again. While their efforts may be sincere, the approach is inappropriate and should be dropped.

In the newest version of this gimmick, students are asked to rate teachers on a scale of one to five without any basis for determining an appropriate rating. Even though it is stated that the observation/evaluation process is solely for the benefit and use of teachers, it is not difficult to imagine teachers being pilloried by some superintendent at a hearing and attempting to have the results of these "scores" entered into testimonial records.

The ultimate will be to make a comparison of teachers although this is contrary to its stated intent. The designation or evaluative declaration of a "successful teacher" via student observation is, at best, amorphous and, at worst, subjective, inconclusive, and possibly vindictive.

The "student test" thus far is limited to high school teachers. All other professional employes, including administrators, are excluded from being subjected to this experience. Inherent in this new idea is the premise that high school students are sufficiently mature--or unbiased--to make judgments about their teachers.

For example, in the category where classroom management and discipline is to be assessed, will the student be knowledgeable of the lack of support the teacher receives from management and the school board? Or that the teacher is not responsible for assignments of students to various classes. Or even class size! Again, we remind teachers that the use of the forms is intended to be optional. Nonetheless, we are aware of how management can impose projects on teachers.

A more appropriate method for finding out what students think of their classes is suggested in the September-October issue of NEA's Today's Education. That method gathers information from students on subject matter, resource materials, and instructional process. The validity of student information also depends quite a bit on what teachers ask students. If they--or anyone else--ask them to make judgments that require a high degree of sophistication of training, students probably cannot give meaningful responses. Observations from students within their powers might be considered valid.

Hold firm, teachers! The time is not to have students evaluate teachers, but for teachers, through their professional union, to raise questions about those who are making the decisions about today's education, the school boards and their hand-picked management, who decide which teachers will be promoted to administrative posts, and the colleges who train the teachers and award educational doctorates to those who run our schools.

There is no sound or beneficial reason for teachers to cooperate with the state board on this project.

PSEA Voice, September 22, 1980

Conclusion

We the Student Observation of Teachers and Teaching Techniques Committee of the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board have concluded that next year's Student Advisory Board should realize our extensive work on this issue; and, because of the adverse reactions and the lack of support from the teachers and the association, carefully consider continuing this committee. We feel that this controversial issue has been researched to its fullest and without support and positive attitudes, we find it difficult for further boards to continue this committee.

Although we feel the important need for an observation of teachers by the students, we also realize that there has been a lack of advancement of the StOTT instrument.

It is further recommended by the 1980-81 Student Advisory Board that this committee be discontinued.

StOTT Committee Members:

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Challenge*

"Former Teachers of the Year, Legislators, Principals & Teachers, IU Staff, Students.

I've been given the difficult task of trying to conclude today's proceedings and also leave you a message which will serve as a challenge. In the simplest language, what our program has tried to convey to you is that everyone has something to say: the old and the young, the witty and the not-so-witty, the gifted and the mentally handicapped, and the outspoken and the silent. The fact that a person does not readily verbalize his or her thoughts does not mean that the person has nothing to say. Take time to listen. Many times we find that the person has spoken but we have not heard.

What a wonderful place our schools would be if each student was treated as someone who has something to give. Ninety-nine times out of one hundred what he or she gives may not be new or exciting but we must always remain open to the possibility. It is worth a thousand failures for the one success. It is our belief that if the opportunity for improvement presents itself, students will strive to build a better society for all of us.

Thank you for attending. Have a nice day and a safe trip home."

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*Closing remarks delivered by Ron Tenpas, "Student Awareness Day Program," May 6, 1981, Forum Building, Harrisburg, PA.